



“Realising the potential
of communities by
ensuring that people
have access to
affordable, sufficient &
suitable housing in
Argyll & Bute”



Community Services

**SCOTTISH EMPTY HOMES CONFERENCE
FRIDAY 26^H NOVEMBER 2013**

**ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL
EMPTY HOMES
GRANT & LOAN FUND**

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Where did it all begin?

- Stock transfer in 2006
- Strategic Housing Fund (SHF) created in 2007
- Local Housing Strategy review in 2010
- Strategy for Empty Private Sector Homes 2011 implemented
- Amended guidance for use of council tax income led to a review of SHF in 2012

Why invest in Empty Homes?

- With average housing stock of 46,500 over 10% of these properties are predominately lying empty
- Housing Waiting List – over **3,000** households with approx **560** annual social relets
- New build annual average target – **110**
- Mismatch in supply and demand

Where are we now

- Empty Homes Officer appointed January 2013
- Council Tax are undertaking a comprehensive review of the register
- The Council have agreed to increase council tax on long-term empty homes to 200%
- Housing, Planning, Building Standards and Environmental Health Officers working together in Area Property Action Groups (APAG)
- Compatibility of actions

How we fund Grant and Loan scheme

- **£3m of investment from Council**
 - £1.5m from Strategic Housing Fund
 - £1.5m from Council Reserves
- **Grants** – Funded through SHF
- **Loans** – Funded through reserves allocation

Grant & Loan Funding

Maximum grant £20,000

Maximum loan £20,000

Combination of grant/loan = max of **£40,000**

3 tier application process

1. Advice and Assistance
2. Pre-application form
3. Formal application form



Legal documents/guidance

- Offer of Empty Homes Grant
- Offer of Empty Homes Loan
- Standard Security
- Information Leaflet
- Pre-application form and guidance note
- Main application form and guidance note
- Criteria

Grant & Loan Conditions

- ❖ Owner/s must agree to rent property to Registered Social Landlord (RSL) or Local Authority for a minimum of 5/10 years
- ❖ Property must have been purchased prior to April 2012
- ❖ Maximum of 6 properties per owner/s
- ❖ The cost of grant/loan investment needs to be financially viable and provide affordable housing for works to proceed
- ❖ Properties must meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS), where this is reasonably practical

Grant & Loan Assessment

How we assess applications for funding:



1. Housing need and demand
2. Location
3. Length of time property has been empty
4. Condition of property
5. Action by owner

Top tips for developing funding

1. Agree strategic priorities/outcomes
2. Local context
3. Allow time for preparing documentation
4. Joint working
5. Early communication with partners
6. Awareness of powers, duties and procedures
7. Realistic expectations
8. Think outside the box!

P.s. Everyone should have a Gordon!!



Empty Homes

Any Questions ?